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ABSTRACT

This set of guidelines is intended for use by employers desiring to establish the training needs of those involved in employee relations. The 16 guidelines cover the following principal activities normally associated with employee relations: staff management policy and aims, staff recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, staff placement and induction, training, staff appraisal and development, health and safety, fire prevention, hygiene, pay and remuneration systems, personnel records and administration, communication, consultation, employee representation, discipline and grievances, and dismissal (including redundancy). Each section is subdivided into discussions of the importance of the topic being addressed, indicators/symptoms of inadequate policies (or practices), legal aspects, good practice, and training requirements. Where appropriate, guidelines are cross-referenced to other publications by the Hotel and Catering Training Board.

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TRAINING GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

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TRAINING GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

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This set of guidelines is intended for use by employers and by HCITB advisers who are concerned to establish the training needs of those involved in employee relations. The sixteen guidelines cover the principal activities normally associated with employee relations, under the following headings:

1 Staff management policy & aims
2 Staff recruitment & selection
3 Terms & conditions of employment
4 Staff placement & induction
5 Training
6 Staff appraisal & development
7 Health & safety
8 Fire prevention
9 Hygiene
10 Pay & remuneration systems
11 Personnel records & administration
12 Communication
13 Consultation
14 Employee representation
15 Discipline & grievances
16 Dismissal (including redundancy).

Each guideline is divided into sections covering:

- ☐ The importance of the subject
- ☐ Indicators/symptoms of inadequate policies (or practices)
- ☐ Legal aspects
- ☐ Good practice
- ☐ Training requirements.

Use of the guidelines thus enables a manager to establish what training needs exist. The guidelines are, where appropriate, cross referenced to other HCITB publications.

Importance

A staff management policy defines the way in which a company plans its dealings with its staff.

All organisations have policies on staff management. However, they may not be written down, and they may be inconsistent; for these reasons problems may arise.

Indicators/symptoms of inadequate policies

Confusion amongst managers or between operating units as to what policy is: absence of written policies and rules: inconsistent decisions on similar matters at different locations or on different occasions: allegations of unfair practices or of unfair dismissal.

Legal aspects

Employers of over five staff are legally required to produce and make available to staff a health and safety policy statement (see page 14). Employers of over 250 staff must include in their annual reports a statement of the company's policy on the employment of disabled persons during the year. (Note: legal requirements relating to the employment of the disabled are currently being revised; check with the Department of Employment.)

They are also encouraged, but not legally bound, to produce policies on:

- ☐ Discipline and grievance matters
- ☐ Equal opportunities in employment, i.e. the avoidance of sex/race/marital discrimination.

Good practice

- ☐ To examine the current employee relations activities and responsibilities in an organisation (sometimes called an employee relations survey or audit)
- ☐ To form a judgement, in the light of such a survey, on the need for:
  - Development or amendment of policy
  - Changes in rules and instructions
  - Changes in responsibility
  - Training
- ☐ Such policies will normally relate to all the staff management activities listed in the other guidelines.

Training requirements

- ☐ How to conduct an audit
- ☐ How to relate an organisation's needs to legal needs/current good practice.

HCITB publication

Employee Relations, see page 54.

Importance

The hotel and catering industry is labour intensive and wage costs account for 25–35% of total running costs. Labour turnover is often higher than in other sectors of industry and frequent changes in staff affect standards. It is vital to recruit and retain the right people.

Indicators/symptoms of ineffective recruitment & selection

Labour turnover higher than local hotel and catering average or previous year: high absenteeism: poor morale: poor quality of service: inability to recruit staff: uncompetitive in local labour market.

Legal aspects

- ☐ Illegal to discriminate against an individual on grounds of sex, race, trade union activity or membership or convictions 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- ☐ Need to employ a quota of registered disabled staff, if twenty or more staff are employed (note: legal requirements relating to the employment of the disabled are currently being revised; check with the Department of Employment)
- ☐ Work permits may be required
- ☐ For a given job, men and women must receive equal pay.

Good practice

- ☐ Keeping and using records of job descriptions of vacancies, responses to advertisements, completed application forms and letters, interview notes, test results, dates of commencement and termination, reasons for leaving
- ☐ Setting up administrative systems for inviting candidates for interviews; conducting interviews; notifying results; choosing the most effective method of selection available; application forms, interviews, tests, group discussions
- ☐ Checking on progress of those selected.

Training requirements

- ☐ Setting up a personnel administration and record system
- ☐ Writing job descriptions
- ☐ Writing and placing advertisements
- ☐ Interviewing, use of tests
- ☐ Monitoring the system for feedback.

HCITB publications

- ☐ *Guide to Recruitment and Selection* (in preparation)
- ☐ *Employee Relations*, see page 19.

Importance

Like pay (see page 20), general terms and conditions of employment are crucial in retaining staff and must be competitive and clearly understood, whilst keeping total employment costs to an acceptable level.

Indicators/symptoms of inadequate terms & conditions

Difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff of adequate quality: staff not available for work when required because of inflexible terms of employment.

Legal aspects

- ☐ The terms and conditions of employment must be given in writing to employees within thirteen weeks of starting employment if they are employed for sixteen hours or more a week
- ☐ If involved in government (or some local authority) work, the Fair Wages Resolution may apply and staff must be employed at the local 'going rate' for the job, often the appropriate wages council rate
- ☐ Restrictions on hours of employment of women and young people.

Good practice

Benefits to be included in an overall package might be considered as follows: loans/salary advances, long service awards, discount facilities for company products/services, sports/social club facilities, subsidised/food/accommodation, savings schemes, time off for study/bereavement/visiting home country, subsidised travel to work, free workwear, holiday entitlement, sick pay scheme, counselling/advisory service for staff.

Training requirements

Managers: updating on the benefits currently provided by employers especially those competing locally for labour.

HCITB publications

- ☐ *A Guide to the Production and Use of Staff Handbooks* (currently being revised)
- ☐ *Employee Relations*, see page 25.

Importance

Even the best staff need a good deal of help and training when settling into a new job; otherwise they may leave. Service to the customer can also suffer.

Indicators/symptoms of poor placement & induction

Poor quality of service: high rate of turnover within first weeks of employment: low morale.

Legal aspects

- ☐ Illegal to discriminate against an individual on grounds of sex, race, trade union activity or membership
- ☐ For a given job, men and women must receive equal pay
- ☐ Employees must receive information, instruction, training and supervision on health and safety, hygiene and fire precautions.

Good practice

Induction training programme/checklists, staff handbook/rules and procedures. Allocate responsibility for induction training. Make a member of staff responsible for each newcomer. Check on progress regularly. Arrange off/on job training as required.

Training requirements

Devising induction training programmes; instructional techniques; drawing up staff handbook/rules; specialist knowledge of health, safety, hygiene, first aid, and fire rules & policies (as appropriate).

HCITB publication

A Guide to the Production and Use of Staff Handbooks (currently being revised).

Importance

Training is particularly vital in a service-orientated industry. It is more effective if carried out in a planned way and for a particular purpose.

Indicators/symptoms of inadequate training

High level of customer complaints: staff leaving after short service: high level of wastage/damage/accidents: inability to recruit, or to promote internally: poor productivity.

Legal aspects

Employers must train staff in safe methods of working, the use of dangerous machines and must make them aware of any relevant hazards (see page 14).

Good practice

Make a senior executive responsible for identifying training needs and identifying gaps between actual and desired performance, organising suitable training arrangements. Have a declared policy of training. Define managers' roles regarding training. Select managers partly for their ability to train. Include effectiveness as a trainer in review of performance. Devise a detailed training plan.

Training requirements

- ☐ Managers/supervisors with a responsibility for training to be trained themselves in training skills (e.g. by attendance on HCITB trainer skills courses).
- ☐ Staff encouraged to take suitable training courses to extend their skills.

HCITB publication

A Guide to Systematic Training (in preparation).

Importance

Appraisal and development systems are important to the organisation and the employee because they are the means by which an organisation seeks to find and develop the skills and abilities of its existing staff to their mutual benefit. If such systems work effectively, the useful knowledge and skills of staff are retained and used rather than lost through unnecessary labour turnover or under-utilisation.

Indicators/symptoms of poor appraisal & development

Staff leaving for personal betterment: low morale: frustration: staff whose performance fails to improve: no internal promotions: jobs always filled from outside: no system for notifying required improvements in performance standards.

Legal aspects

No specific legal implications except that an employer must avoid sex/race discrimination.

Good practice

- ☐ A published policy of staff development
- ☐ Regular systematic appraisal with defined timetable and procedure
- ☐ Evidence that job performance standards have been agreed and monitored
- ☐ Appraisers trained in the practice and skills of appraisal interviewing and counselling
- ☐ Records of appraisals and progress kept and used
- ☐ Staff should have the right to see and comment on their appraisal document
- ☐ Evidence of internal promotion and development
- ☐ Senior management involvement and support
- ☐ Regular monitoring of effectiveness

- ☐ Particular attention paid to the needs of newly employed staff
- ☐ Use of internal transfers as a development tool.

Training requirements

- ☐ Senior managers/personnel specialists: how to design an appraisal system, developing and using appropriate records
- ☐ All appraisers: conduct of appraisal interviews
- ☐ All appraisees: purpose of system and their part in it.

Importance

A vital subject: more days are lost through work related accidents/illnesses in British industry than through strikes. This could be avoided with sufficient care and better attention to health and safety at work.

Indicators/symptoms of health & safety problems

Dirty or untidy premises and staff: customer complaints: high accident rate: high sickness and absenteeism level: recruitment and retention difficulties in 'high risk' areas: low morale: lack of protective clothing: issue of prohibition or improvement notices by safety, or health inspectorate.

Legal aspects

- ☐ Obligations to use, handle, store and transport articles and substances safely
- ☐ Safety policy statement (unless fewer than five staff) to be displayed and communicated including a statement of the employer's safety organisation and arrangements for carrying out the policy
- ☐ Training and supervision to be given
- ☐ Safe equipment and systems of work to be provided
- ☐ Official accident notification procedure to be followed (now also includes accidents to members of public)
- ☐ First aid equipment, personnel and facilities to be provided
- ☐ Training to be provided in the operation of dangerous machines.

Good practice

To meet legal requirements and the manager's responsibility for the health and safety of staff, the following practices are desirable.

The review, updating and monitoring of the effectiveness of a safety policy, which is communicated to staff: arrangements for consultation on health and safety matters, e.g. a safety committee: refresher training and supervision in safe working methods: safety audits: codes of practice: investigation and follow-up of accidents and 'near miss' situations: hazard spotting and reliable reporting procedures: establishment of good working relationship with local EHO: a named individual with responsibility for health and safety: access to medical expertise.

Training requirements

- ☐ Managers: updating on legal provisions, first aid, hazard spotting skills, how to investigate and report accidents, communication, writing a safety policy and procedure
- ☐ All staff (as appropriate): operation and cleaning of dangerous machinery and equipment, their responsibility for health and safety, obligations to the public.

HCITB publications

- ☐ *Training for Health and Safety in the Hotel and Catering Industry*, see page 11 *et seq*
- ☐ *Kitchen Safety Training Aid* (in preparation).

Importance

Fires in hotel and catering establishments continue to cost a good deal of money and a number of lives each year. It is vital to take preventative measures to reduce this risk and to be able to control any fires that may occur.

Indicators/symptoms of poor fire prevention

Inadequate fire fighting equipment: poor maintenance/faulty equipment: panic in the event of fire: blocked exits: open fire doors: lack of access to building/delay in calling Fire Brigade: little reaction to alarm system: inappropriate furnishing materials: trapped people/delay in rescuing people due to inadequate registers: lack of training records.

Legal aspects

Fire certificates are required for hotels and boarding houses with sleeping accommodation for six or more people; cafes, restaurants and public houses employing twenty people or more (or more than ten people elsewhere than on the ground floor). The conditions specified by the certificate must be complied with.

Good practice

To ensure that adequate fire prevention measures are taken the following good practice is recommended.

Regular testing of alarms, fire warning and emergency lighting: regular inspection of premises, especially at night: no smoking areas: correct maintenance and checking of electrical equipment/fire fighting equipment: designating a Fire Officer: use of non-flammable furniture and furnishings: regular staff training, particularly for relief or temporary staff: fire practices (including guests): inspection of fire exits: liaison with Fire Authority: fire procedure displayed.

Training requirements

- ☐ How to prevent fires
- ☐ How to raise the alarm
- ☐ Evacuation procedure
- ☐ Correct use of fire fighting equipment.

HCITB publication

Training for Health and Safety in the Hotel and Catering Industry, see page 39.

Importance

A reputation for poor or inadequate hygiene can quickly ruin a business. It is essential to maintain and implement good hygiene practice to prevent the risk of food poisoning and disease. Contaminated food causes serious illness and possibly death when consumed.

Indicators/symptoms of poor hygiene

Prosecutions by the Environmental Health Officer: dirty premises: untidy and careless attitude by staff: pests: people ill after eating food: customer complaints: lack of business: inadequate storage facilities/equipment for handling food.

Legal aspects

The Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1970 which specify requirements for food premises, sanitary requirements, washing facilities, food preparation arrangements, refuse disposal, protective clothing, personal hygiene and reportable illnesses.

Good practice

To meet legal requirements and to ensure that any risk to personal health is reduced the following practices are recommended.

Use of cleaning schedule to ensure regular/thorough cleaning: provision of headware and clothing: good staff room, toilet and washing facilities: staff training (including temporary and part-time): purchase of equipment that is easy to clean and maintain: adequate premises: elimination of dirt traps: medical screening: pest control contract: advice from EHO: high standards of hygiene set by management: clear notices (in appropriate languages if necessary) on hygiene requirements.

Training requirements

- ☐ Personal hygiene
- ☐ Food handling
- ☐ Legal obligations
- ☐ Temperature control
- ☐ How to clean
- ☐ Pest control
- ☐ Food storage
- ☐ Waste disposal.

HCITB publications

- ☐ *Food Hygiene Training Cards* (available in English, Spanish or Urdu)
- ☐ *Hygiene Training Package* (audio visual: in course of preparation).

Importance

Vital because labour is such a high cost element and the benefits offered will be crucial in attracting and retaining staff. An ad hoc system may result in an unduly high wage bill, whilst the most sophisticated pay system will be to no avail if pay is not pitched at the right level.

Indicators/symptoms of inadequate pay systems

Difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff: misunderstandings and grievances over pay: uncompetitive in local labour market: pay rates or records not written down.

Legal aspects

- ☐ The minimum rates laid down by the relevant wages council must be met by those in scope and their Wages Orders displayed
- ☐ Restrictions on hours of work of women and children
- ☐ Equal pay must be given to men and women carrying out similar work
- ☐ Tax and national insurance deduction obligations
- ☐ An itemised pay statement must be provided, as appropriate
- ☐ Some employees entitled to time off from work, e.g. antenatal care (paid), or to carry out public duties (unpaid).

Good practice

Clear system for notifying starters/changes in pay etc, personnel record reconciled with pay roll: pay records up to date: clear notification to staff of rates of pay, especially overtime, holiday pay and other special payments: logical pay differential system: agreed method of dealing with tips/service charge: clear agreed system for salary review/appraisal: participation in local salary surveys.

Training requirements

- ☐ Pay systems and documentation
- ☐ Familiarisation with different systems, e.g. job evaluation, to facilitate policy decisions
- ☐ Legal implications of Wages Council Act and Sex Discrimination/Equal Pay Acts
- ☐ Income tax and national insurance obligations
- ☐ Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act: time off provisions.

HCITB publication

Employee Relations, see page 26.

Importance

Records are a valuable aid to the organisation in the control of labour costs as they provide factual data for measuring such costs and making decisions: to control, it is necessary to record and measure. Staff will benefit from being effectively managed.

Indicators/symptoms of poor records & administration

Absence of virtually all records: uncertainty about 'who keeps which' records: no senior person with overall responsibility: inability to identify or breakdown labour costs: no formal system for requesting and hiring new staff.

Legal aspects

- ☐ By law, records must be kept of accidents (see page 14)
- ☐ It is recommended in the relevant codes of practice (but not legally enforceable) that adequate information is held about disciplinary matters, grievances, sex/race mix of workforce, equal pay matters, which can be used to help deal with employment disputes
- ☐ Records must be kept to enable pay and tax matters to be properly dealt with.

Good practice

- ☐ Useful to keep records covering: recruitment and selection, personnel specifications, advertisements and responses, personal details, previous employment history, training and development, additional information on pay and other benefits, disciplinary matters, absence and lateness, labour turnover, medical history.

- ☐ A senior person should be in charge of personnel records and administration, to ensure adequate confidentiality, clear allocation of responsibility for gathering, recording, storing and disseminating information, keeping records accurate and up to date, and monitoring the effectiveness of the system.

Training requirements

- ☐ Senior managers: how to select best system
- ☐ Specialists: how to implement system
- ☐ All staff: why records are required and how they can be used for their benefit.

HCITB publication

Employee Relations, see page 35.

Importance

No hotel or catering operation can work successfully without an effective communication system. This is particularly true where there is a geographical spread of workers or where shift working is involved. Good communications are needed to maintain standards, and avoid confusion.

Indicators/symptoms of inadequate communication

Mistakes: high level of complaints: poor level of services, supervisory staff complain of being ignored or bypassed.

Legal aspects

- ☐ Certain information must be communicated to staff (on health and safety, see pages 4, 10, 14, on terms and conditions of employment, see page 8)
- ☐ If a trade union is recognised it can demand disclosure of information for use in collective bargaining.

Good practice

To suit the needs of each business one or more of the following widely used practices may be helpful:

Company newspapers
Newsletters
Briefing groups
Notices
Audio/visual presentations
Regular departmental meetings
Staff handbooks
Staff consultative committees.

Training requirements

For those responsible, in such topics as: running a meeting, chairmanship, effective writing, compiling agendas and minutes, operating a briefing group, representational skills, consultative and negotiating skills, how to give clear instructions.

HCITB publications

- ☐ *Employee Relations*, see page 40
- ☐ *A Guide to the Production and Use of Staff Handbooks* (currently being revised).

Importance

It is sensible to enable those working in an establishment to contribute to decisions that are made about its running. This increases their commitment and can improve the quality of decisions made; especially important in a personal, service industry.

Indicators/symptoms of inadequate consultation

Staff grievances: lack of commitment to the business and especially to any changes introduced: strong 'grapevine', communicating rumour and speculation: poor level of service.

Legal aspects

If a trade union is recognised, it has the right to appoint safety representatives whom the employer is obliged to consult on health and safety matters and who have various powers.

Good practice

Establishment of staff consultative committees, training participants, regular meetings.

Training requirements

- ☐ Establishing a consultative committee
- ☐ Running and chairing meetings
- ☐ Representational skills.

HCITB publications

- ☐ *Employee Relations*, see page 40
- ☐ *Training for Health and Safety in the Hotel and Catering Industry*, see page 27.

Importance

In a labour intensive industry the quality of service and relationships is vital. Thus staff need the opportunity to express views on matters relating to their employment; grievances should also be adequately dealt with.

Indicators/symptoms of inadequate arrangements

High level of grievance: high staff turnover: low morale: low quality of service: long-standing grievances.

Legal aspects

- ☐ Staff: right not to be discriminated against because of trade union membership/activity; employees cannot be fairly dismissed for refusing to join a non-independent union
- ☐ Legal protection or redress exists in certain circumstances for those unwilling to join a union where a closed shop exists; there are also controls over the establishment of new closed shops (see also opposite page).

Good practice

Can include joint consultative committees, briefing groups, adequate information given to staff, approachable management, adequate facilities for employee representatives, negotiating arrangements if appropriate.

Training requirements

- ☐ Managers: the purpose of employee representation; relationships of representatives with management; development of skills in handling such relationships, running the necessary meetings and, if needed, in negotiation
- ☐ Representatives: need training in the skills of representation, communication, and if appropriate, negotiation.

HCITB publication

Employee Relations, see pages 36 and 40.

Importance

Discipline is needed in the control of any work group and both management and staff may have complaints or grievances they need to resolve. It is necessary to have rules and procedures for settling such matters.

Indicators/symptoms of inadequate arrangements for settling discipline/ grievance problems

Much management time spent resolving disputes: staff discontent: industrial tribunal cases successfully brought against the company: high staff turnover.

Legal aspects

If the company has a disciplinary/grievance procedure, details of it must be included in the statement of terms of employment given to staff. It will normally include the name of the person to whom staff can apply if dissatisfied with any disciplinary decision.

Good practice

- ☐ Management should draw up rules covering standards of performance and conduct which are readily available and are explained to staff
- ☐ Employees should be made aware of the likely consequences of breaking rules and particularly the type of conduct which may warrant summary dismissal
- ☐ Disciplinary and grievance procedures should be written down and given to, or made easily available to all staff, making the individual's rights clear and detailing the procedure to be followed by management
- ☐ Provision should be made for the individual to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union representative

- ☐ A right of appeal procedure should be included
- ☐ For full details refer to ACAS Code of Practice No 1 (which is reproduced in *Employee Relations*).

Training requirements

- ☐ Managers: how to establish/update discipline and grievance systems, interviewing skills to handle disciplinary matters
- ☐ All staff: the nature, content and purpose of the rules
- ☐ Staff representatives: training in representation.

HCITB publication

Employee Relations, see page 42.

Importance

The decision to terminate someone's employment is important to the employer because he loses part of his work force, and to the employee because he loses his livelihood. The process is now governed by legal provisions and such a decision must be taken in the correct way to avoid trouble and expense.

Indicators/symptoms of ineffective dismissal arrangements

Difficulty in obtaining staff if caused by company having bad reputation with potential employees: excessive numbers of dismissal cases being taken to Conciliation Officer/industrial tribunal: managers/supervisors unclear about procedure/authority to dismiss.

Legal aspects

- ☐ An employee, whatever his length of service, can claim unfair dismissal if the reason is alleged to be race, sex, trade union membership or activity, or spent conviction
- ☐ Employees working sixteen hours a week or more (or 8–16 hours a week after five years' service) can claim unfair dismissal if dismissed or made redundant after 52 weeks' service (104 weeks if employer has twenty or less staff)
- ☐ An employer must have a 'valid reason' for dismissal and the dismissal must be carried out in a reasonable manner
- ☐ If dismissal is due to redundancy, then the employer has the right to time off to seek alternative employment, and the right to a trial period if offered alternative employment by his existing employer; he is also entitled to redundancy pay related to his age and length of service.

Good practice

A business should have: an adequate set of rules and disciplinary procedures (see page 28), records of disciplinary matters, an agreed redundancy procedure.

Training requirements

- ☐ Managers: conduct of disciplinary interviews and keeping adequate disciplinary record; adequate knowledge of legal requirements relating to redundancy and dismissal
- ☐ All staff: procedures for dealing with grievances and rules they are expected to observe.

HCITB publication

Employee Relations, see page 44.

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All HCITB publications and further details of the training services available can be obtained from any of the Regional Offices

1 STAFF MANAGEMENT POLICY & AIMS

2 STAFF RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

3 TERMS & CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

4 STAFF PLACEMENT & INDUCTION

5 TRAINING

6 STAFF APPRAISAL & DEVELOPMENT

7 HEALTH & SAFETY

8 FIRE PREVENTION

9 HYGIENE

10 PAY & REMUNERATION SYSTEMS

11 PERSONNEL RECORDS & ADMINISTRATION

12 COMMUNICATION

13 CONSULTATION

14 EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION

15 DISCIPLINE & GRIEVANCES

16 DISMISSAL (INCLUDING REDUNDANCY)